

A Pagan Anthology

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A Pagan Anthology

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TO THE

P A G A N

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NOTE

The Poems in this volume are mainly of the
authors' own choosing; some of them have
appeared in past issues of the Pagan

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From a Jewish Folk Song

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EGMONT HEGEL ARENS

*I. Blind**II. Twenty Blocks**III. Fear and Love**IV. Remembrance*

BLIND

Seeking God
I went to where men worship His name:
A lofty temple.

"Give us this day our daily bread!"
They whined—
Fervently.

The sleek priest was thinking of his dinner with
wine after the sermon,
And the deacon was gloating over his neighbor's
wickedness,
And the bald-headed man up in front was thinking
of a pair of legs that belonged to a chorus girl,
And the pretty woman with the baby eyes was
thinking of nothing at all, singing hymns only
with her mouth,
And the ugly old lady with the hair-lip was hating
the beauty of her neighbor.

God didn't seem anywhere in evidence,
And I started away
Thinking to find Him in his old haunts
Down by the river
Where the whip-poor-will in the willow-tree
Sings:

"Love-us-Lord! Love-us-Lord!"

But you can't keep God out
Even from churches. . . .
Up in the choir was a blind girl
Singing:

"Tho dark my way
Lead Thou me on!"

And where these were blind
I knew that she could see
The green pastures
And still waters.

TWENTY BLOCKS

The daughters of the rich
Go shopping on Thirty-fourth street:
They are sweet, round and succulent,
Nourished, firm-fleshed,
Dainty and expensive morsels
To glut desire
And deaden the spirit.

Down on Fourteenth street
There is a waitress in a restaurant,—
Fresh-skinned and young-limbed,—
With a gesture that speaks of nodding hill-flow'rs
in summer.
For fifteen cents I order ham and eggs:
But she will bring me a vivifying draught
For my soul's quickening. . . .

FEAR AND LOVE

Fearing my father,
I sat still at table
When the boys came up the alley
Calling:
"Come out! Come out!"
And I hated the discipline
Which held me there
Foolishly.

Loving my mate,
I sat still at home
When Life came up the alley
Shouting:
"Come out! Come out!"
And I hated the tenderness
Which held me there
Perhaps wisely.

REMEMBRANCE

It is holiday time in the woods,
And all the trees are to have new dresses
To welcome the Spring:

But the sombre pine,
In his old black clothes,
Sighs for the kiss
And the clinging love
Of winter's snow.

M. ALEXANDER

I. Sheerba Smoke

SHEERBA SMOKE

I.

On a gaudy rug,
To the accompaniment
Of crotali and clarinet,
Half-naked
Little brown-skinned ghawazi,
Dance
The dance of the wasp.

II.

An old Jewess,
With ravaged features
And massive legs,
Beckons to passing men.
Through the lattice windows
Pretty Levantine girls
Are seen
Lounging about.

III.

Spinning round and round,
Moaning and howling
To the shriek and rumble
Of barbaric music,
Fiendish and terrible—
Dervishes dance.

IV.

Boats on the Nile. . . .
At sunset they resemble
Butterflies a-tremble on open flowers;
At night,
Sheeted phantoms
In the heart of a sapphire.

MAXWELL BODENHEIM

I. Soldiers

II. The Walk

III. Intrusion

IV. To a Man

SOLDIERS

They sprawl in the coffee-colored mud
As though they were its lovers, slowly kissing it,
But one long crescent of them, dipped in moonlight,
Like gray sparrows on whom silver bubbles end-
lessly sputter,
Lies on the stubble of a little hill.
The smile of one face is like a fierce mermaid
Floating dead in a little pale brown pond.
The lips of one are twisted
To a hieroglyphic of silence
Bearing strands of froth woven by little death-
spiders.
The face of another is like a shining frog.
Another face is met by a question
That digs into it like sudden claws.
Beside it is a face like a mirror
In which a stiffened child dangles from a string. . . .
Dead soldiers, in a moon-dipped crescent,
Whose faces form a gravely mocking sentence.

THE WALK

A shadow-leaf parts between fingers ;
Its pieces swing upward and wind
About the shadowy, blowing, blue hair of the day,
But the day shakes them loose, and they shiver down
Like bits of fire that have dreamed themselves
cold
So our friendship, as we walk along,
Slipped from us, to form a far-off, gossamer beauty,
And came back to us, like a dream that wants to
sleep.

INTRUSION

The lilies sag with rain-drops. . . .
Their petals hold fire that does not break out,
(As though it slept between vapor-silk
It could not burn)
And a young breeze stumbles upon the lilies
And strokes them with his hands. . . .
The lilies and the young breeze are not unlike
Your silence and the mist of soft words breaking it.—

TO A MAN

Like sea-foam dancing in the upward swing
Of whirling waves that heave against each other
Your silken thoughts tremble upward
Upon the tumbling passion of your life,
And die.
But when you bent, inviting a flower
To grace a corner of your mind,
The sea-foam stayed, and the waves disappeared.

PAULINE CAHN

I. Rest

REST

I am so tired—so tired.
I see too many people,
Read too many books.
Do too many things.

I hate the theaters,
I hate my work,
I want you,—only you. . . .
Come to me between the cool sheets
And let me burrow my head in your shoulder.
Kiss my two eyes. . . .

The moon is making peaceful patches on the yellow
coverlet;
The hoof-beats of my thoughts are growing faint.

HART CRANE

I. October-November

II. Fear

OCTOBER-NOVEMBER.

Indian-summer-sun
With crimson feathers whips away the mists,—
Dives through the filter of trellises
And gilds the silver on the blotched arbor-seats.

Now gold and purple scintillate
On trees that seem dancing
In delirium;
Then the moon
In a mad orange flare
Floods the grape-hung night.

FEAR.

The host, he says that all is well,
And the fire-wood glow is bright;
The food has a warm and tempting smell,—
But on the window licks the night.

Pile on the logs. . . . Give me your hands,
Friends! No,—it is not fright. . . .
But hold me . . . somewhere I heard demands. . . .
And on the window licks the night.

ROUTLEDGE CURRY

I. An Orchid

AN ORCHID.

The old mahogany fireplace
Had an ample cloth of dark green velvet
Over its mantlepiece.

On it
I placed a slender silver vase,
And filled it with a solitary orchid
Of rare beauty.

The peacock flower
Possessed a soft shy face,
And it rolled quaint scarlet kisses
To me
Down curious paths of lavender and gold,
Trailing its eager, graceful petals
To a point.

MARY CAROLINE DAVIES

I. Ambition

II. "Also"

AMBITION

The little fire
On the hearth
Dreaming of forests
Where it will
One day
Race and sing,—

And we before it
Dreaming.

"ALSO."

Could that man ever have seen the stars,
That sacred historian who added,
As a careless afterthought,
Scrawling it down, perhaps, in the margin for
insertion,
"He made the stars also—"?

PAUL ELDRIDGE

I. When I am Dead

II. The Moon and the Ocean

III. You Were so Pure

IV. The Forgetful Owls

WHEN I AM DEAD

I'll have no compromise,
No bargain-driving
With the gods.
And so,
When I am dead,
Let them not offer me
With oriental hospitality
Their Paradise.
Let not their angels
In cynical humility
Wash my feet with myrrh,
Anoint my head
With perfumed oils,
And flap their wings
Like silver castanets
In mocking merriment.

I'll have no dealings
With the gods—
I've known them too long,
And learned the cunning fashion
Of their arts.
And so,
When I am dead,
Let vulgar Earth
Absorb me with her kiss,
And clasp me tightly
With her rough unclean arms
Against her breast.
And when she wearies
Of my flesh and bones,
Let her crush me in her palms,
And render me
A blade of grass,
To dance a summer's day

And throw kisses
To the stars.
Alas, the gods are greedy,
And seek their profit,—
They'll never give me peace,
When I am dead—
They'll offer me
Most graciously,
Their Paradise. . . .

THE MOON AND THE OCEAN

(To Sylvia)

The Moon,
The old roué,
Watches with desire
The Earth below.
The Ocean,
Prudish maid,
Hides her breasts,
Feverishly,—
But the winds, laughing,
Blow off incessantly
Her flimsy draperies.

The Moon,
A golden hoop,
Rolls unsteadily
Upon the ragged edges
Of the shivering clouds.
The Ocean,
Mischievous girl,
Runs after—
Her hands raised up
To catch it,
And shouts and laughs
In utter merriment.

The Moon
The painted mountebank
Of the infinite circus,
Grins and bows
To his celestial audience.

The Ocean,
A clumsy bear
Sways and dances

To the bagpipes
Of the merry winds.
The Moon,
The hoary recluse,
Gazes calmly
Across eternity,
And meditates
On Death.

The Ocean,
The Earth's demagogue,
Silver-tongued,
Harangues the winds,
Persuading them
To blow across the Moon
And blind him.

YOU WERE SO PURE

You were so pure,
So exquisite,
I feared to touch
Your little hand;
I feared to bend upon my knee,
And swear eternal passion.
You were so tender,
So like the bud
Of a fragile rose,
I dared not whisper,
"I love you,"
That for fear, like a coarse wind,
I might tear
The delicate petals

And so I walked away,
And wept my sorrow
Into my hands.

And now you're married
You gave a dowry,
And bargained cleverly
To be a wife.
I saw you hang upon his arm,
And look with amorous desire
Into his eyes,
While he was yawning.

And so, I walked away,
And laughed my sorrow
Into my hands.

THE FORGETFUL OWLS

Nightly,
Silence summons to herself
The Owls of the world,
And whispers in their feathered ears
The Truth of Things,
Which they promise
To repeat to Man
When he wakes.
But the Sun,
The hater of Truth,
Dazzles their round eyes,
And they fall asleep,
And dream—
And forget. . .

And Man seeks—
Seeks in vain
What only Silence
And the Owls know. . .

MAX ENDICOFF

I. Lament Drolatique

II. To Whom

III. At Twilight

IV. The Young Officer

V. Tricked

LAMENT DROLATIQUE

Death overtook her
Like a stealthy storm-cloud
Pouncing upon a scintillating sunbeam
And engulfing it within a stifling darkness.

It was but yesterday
That she lay in my arms. . . .
Her warm, moist lips were seeking mine,
Her soft round arms,
Like a noose of quivering satin,
Were twined about my neck,
And her dark, brooding eyes
Flooded the bleak and barren chambers of my heart
With the joyous light of love.
This thing
This thing, lying so frigid and inert
Upon the bare, unswept floor,
And draped in a shroud of melancholy black,
Once lived and loved.
Now, it means no more to me
Than that insignificant little fly
That crawls so unconcernedly
Upon the cold blanched forehead.
And the mourners,
With their raucous wails and forced tears,
Are splendid buffoons in a mock tragedy.
But why—why
Are the chambers of my heart
More bleak and barren
Than ever. . . .

TO WHOM?

(Our losses were trivial, 728 killed and 4,354 wounded.—European News Item.)

Trivial——?

To whom? TO WHOM?

Not to the dead,
Whose battered bodies
Are like the shapeless fragments of an image
Carelessly crushed by the wanton hand
Of a titanic malevolence.
In them, the lust of life
Flamed as sharp and clear
As in the wheezing breasts of the hounds
Who foam and whine
For the blood
They do not have to give.

Trivial——?

To whom? TO WHOM?

Not to the bereaved at home,
The tender women
Who make gods of the men they love—
Their tear-scorched prayers
Are of passionate pity for the voiceless dead
And of baffled hatred for the boastful living.

Trivial——?

To whom? TO WHOM?

Not to the ferocious enemy,
For they too have their dead—
The uncounted horde of startled beings,
That black treachery,
With artful and cunning words,

Had lured from the free and turbulent spaces of life
 To the bleak, eternal confines
 Of a hurried and undesired grave.

Trivial——?
 To whom? TO WHOM?

AT TWILIGHT

A gentle peaceful gray
 Steals over the sky
 And rebukes the sun for his flamboyant gaiety
 Until his head sinks beneath the western rim—
 A street lamp opens wide its yellow eye—
 The staccato stutter of traffic subsides
 And is lost
 In the uncanny silence
 (As of a living thing suddenly touched by death)
 That hangs over the earth for one brief moment.

It is that moment
 When mankind is wont
 To lower its weary arms,
 Lift its drooping shoulders,
 And listen devoutly
 To the clangorous call of a church
 Or to the questioning murmurs of its soul.
 But this long long line of men,
 With snarling bayonets aimed straight at the sky,
 Never heed the voice of either.
 Stolidly
 They march, march, march—
 As if they were strange beings
 Coming from some alien land
 That knows of neither church nor soul.

THE YOUNG OFFICER

A supple speckless figure in costly habillements
With cloth-carved calves,
Severe, unbending, breadth of shoulder,
And the flippant insouciance
Of a service-cap
Tipped with diligent carelessness
To one side of the head . . .
To this young untried recruit
The War
Must be a sartorial adventure,
A world-wide exhibition of the tailor's art.

TRICKED

We walked along the Avenue arm in arm—
And I,
Who hoarded the beauty wrenched from life,
(Giving nought in return but sneers of mockery),
I, in a moment of wanton recklessness,
Opened wide the doors of this prized store-house
Filled with memories
That are like priceless jewels
Torn from the earth with crushed and bleeding
fingers.
She smiled gently, pressed my arm in sympathy,
And stopped before a garish shop-window
To admire a hat.

ERNESTINE HARA

I. Modern Art

MODERN ART

Arms awry
Legs astride
This jumbled mass
Of humans
Sprawling
On the green.

What demons
Set them
Rolling,
Stumbling,
Falling crazily
Over each other
Like a stupid mess
Of kittens
Rolling downhill
To a picnic?

JOSEPH U. HARRIS:

I. The Play

II. Crossing a Canal-Lock

III. The Street

IV. Moths

V Reincarnate

THE PLAY.

I watched you curve your arm over the back of
your companion's chair,
Sitting behind you in the crowded theatre,
Watched him, as the dull performance progressed,
Lean back until his head rested upon your arm.

I crushed my program in my hand until it was a
shapeless mass
Then dropped it on the floor listlessly.

The performance went on. I do not know whether
it was good or bad.

I only know that you sat with your arm over the
back of the seat in front of me, and that your
friend's head rested upon it lightly.

As I walked rapidly homeward my eyes were full
of tears.

But when they asked me about the play, I could not
remember.

CROSSING A CANAL - LOCK.

From this old canal-lock
The black water creeps out on either side.
There is not a glimmer of light in it; it might be the
Styx—

The night hangs over it like crepe upon a door,
Warning away every happy face, every gay footstep.
High up the cliff gleam the lights of the dance-pa-
vilion

The faint echo of violins a stray bit of laugh-
ter

Now a single thread of light touches the water like a
ray of moonshine wandering over a corpse.

TO A PRIEST

I have listened to your profession of faith.
I have sat with your sorrowful flock and listened to
your expression of confident trust,
Your splendid reliance upon the blessed providence
of God, the Father,
Who "for a purpose" . . . has . . . "in His inscrut-
able wisdom" . . . "permitted"—every un-
godly thing:
Who "has seen fit" . . . to meddle with the incon-
sequential maneuverings of all the ecclesiastics;
Who has been a veritable village-gossip, with a
finger in every man's pie;
Who directs battles. . . .

And I say to you:
O little meddler!
Come down from your little pulpit and take off your
little vestments;
And leave your congregation to the holy ministry
of silence!
Who are you to proclaim the purposes of the
Infinite!
What manner of god is this that you have made in
your own image?

THE STREET

Who are you, walking the streets with me tonight?
Are you following me, or am I following you? Or
is each of us afraid of losing the other?

The street divides us.

From time to time you glance furtively across at me.
Twice now I have caught you, and there were
other times that I did not know.

From time to time my eyes follow you also. Maybe
you have caught me too.

Why do you walk so rapidly, as though you were
afraid to stop?

Listen! I too am afraid to stop. I have been walk-
ing through life this way. I do not know what
would happen if I did not keep on.

I wonder if *you* have always walked like this, with
quick, rapid strides, afraid to look behind you,
afraid to stop, even for an instant.

Couldn't we—couldn't we stop, just for once?

I want to talk to you. I know that you could tell
me wonderful things.

And perhaps you would think the things I should
tell you were wonderful.

Let us stop, just this once. We are both so tired of
walking.

Let us stop—now. See? I am going more slowly.
It is foolish to walk so fast.

Now—now you are going to stop. We shall tell
each other wonderful things.

It is over—it is over, this endless walking. We are
stopping, we are stopping. . . .

But you haven't stopped! Where are you? What
has happened? I cannot see you any longer.

O God! I had forgotten—! The street is between us.

MOTHS

We flit about,
Dart in and out,
Like moths around a flame.
We singe our wings with whisperings
 of cowardice and shame;
The hungry fire of our desire
Forever burns the same.
By passion spurred,
Hopes quickly stirred,
We flutter here and there.
On wings of fear we hover near
The lamps' enticing glare,
Until the light is quenched in night,
Our longing in despair.
Through endless days,
In darkened ways,
We crawl with drooping wings.
Only at night we take delight
In airy wanderings;
And then we seem to only dream
A thousand futile things.
So here and there,
And everywhere,
Our weary wings we ply.
The lights that lure are never sure,
They flare, burn now, and die.
Our only song is one of wrong,
And our only speech a sigh.

REINCARNATE

Somewhere my spirit, in the long ago,
Communed with yours, or in some ancient land
I walked and talked with you. I have clasped
your hand
Before, somewhere, and in your eyes I know
That I have sometimes seen an answering glow
Of hope, and longing. (Do you understand?)
It seems as if in Time's eternal sand
Bright memory-grains illumined the dull flow
Of dead hours that make up futurity;
And out of dreams that I have dreamed there rise
Visions of you which quell my discontent.
Almost I think rare moments we have spent
Together thrill me with a sweet surprise
As they troop back into my memory.

ELIZABETH JAEGER

I. Croak

CROAK

When it darkens and rains
I am not anything human :
I am a frog.
I shelter myself under moss-covered stones,
Blink out at people,
Who passing leave such queer marks,
And say : "Damn the water
 Damn the mud
 Damn everything."
With relish I croak in my nook.

LESLIE NELSON JENNINGS

I. Menage

MENAGE

"Blinds down!" they cry,
Mouthing me ancient shibboleths.
They say: If one lived alone
It would be different.
But I cannot understand;
I will not hide my thoughts.
Let them be lithe girls,
Combing their hair
Perpetually;
Let them be happy and idle
In their clear white muslin shifts.
There they stand
For all the world to see,
Graciously domestic.

Oh yes,
I know how this revolts them,—
My neighbors who dwell in splendid,
 empty houses;
Because they are outraged,
Shall I also live in loneliness?

Let them say that I keep mistresses,
That I am shameless.
Nevertheless,
My windows shall remain
Open to the sky.

ALICE LOUISE JONES

I. Baccante

BACCANTE

I bathe in the lush of the moon ;
Of her shadows I weave
From my breast to my knees a whole garment
To tantalize Pan!
My mouth has the red of the adder
With sharp teeth that sting
As they close on the mouth of another.
My breasts are like great pointed bubbles
Which the hands
Of some wood-god have fashioned.
.....I wait for the beat of Pan's hoofs
As he leaps
Pushing great hairy fingers to crumble the shoots
Of the vines and bushes that hide me:—
Then
Spring I erect
Tossing glad swaying hands and bright shoulders,
A moment,
And then, —
Fleet of foot, with wild laughter
I whirl and am gone.

JOSEPH KLING

I. Dedication

II. Portraits

III. Extase

IV. FacultyParade

V. Farewell

VI. Lux in Tenebris

VII. Study in Reversion

DEDICATION

Madre dolorosa
O madre mia!

The heavy hand of Sorrow
Has bowed your head,
And the blighting breath of Care
Has withered your cheek;

Yet your soul's sweet light
Shines through its mist of tears
Like the beatific smile of Her
They call the Queen of Heaven,

O madre dolorosa,
Madre dolorosa mia!

PORTRAITS

I.

When my friend Don Juan
Has left his last love
He becomes gravely philosophic.....
Wonders why a man
Cannot help making love
To every pretty woman
That crosses his path.....
Berates himself harshly
For his wicked misdeeds,
Praises the virtues
Of honest married folk,
A happy home, loving wife,—

But reminds himself suddenly
Of a "pressing engagement";
Adjusts his cravat,
Smiles,
And departs.....

II.

Sweet half-conscious hypocrite,
Golden-haired, apple-cheeked,
Plaything of flattery,
Woman of women;
Grudgingly envious,
Hintingly slanderous,
Flirtingly philandering;
To be young,
To be tempting,
To be tempting
Without yielding,—
The business of life.....

EXTASE

(A ma princesse lointaine)

Your beauty is a golden tide
Half-mist, half-light
On which my heart is afloat....

No cup in Heaven will have
The soft red rim of your lips.
I hear your voice sing low.....
The world is fading, dying;
Only you and I still live,
A flame in the sunless void.....

May the end never be!

FACULTY-PARADE

Tossing cap- tassel: crest of owls,
 Black gown and hood: livery of crows,
 Lip-laugh and word-trill: chatter of magpies....

Purple damask,
 Crimson satin,
 Amethyst velvet,
 Silvery plush,—
 (For cape and cowl and gaping sleeve)
 Glorious raiment,
 All too beautiful
 For magpies,
 Crows
 And owls.....

 FAREWELL

(*To D——.*)

I have placed you
 In the hollow of my hand
 Little toy-woman,
 And I gaze at you disdainfully
 Or throw you lightly aside.....
 Or half-shut my eyes,
 And poetize dreamily
 About your dainty beauty.....
 Or put my mouth
 Close to yours
 So that I see only
 The rose-red of your cheek
 And feel the soft warmth
 Of your lips.....
 Or whisper half-audibly

Of the passion that makes
My blood a tide of fire.....
But after all,
You are in the hollow of my hand,—
I the master,
And you the marionette.....

* * *

My soul craves
A nobler happiness
Than passionate kisses
And the feel of soft flesh
In my fingers.....

* * *

Love is a lie....
Any man-animal
Whose lips
Are at your throat,
Whose hands are eager
For your breasts
Will drivel with lying tongue
About endless love.....

* * *

Aristocrats or gum-chewers,
They purr, and smirk, and sing-song
questioningly,
Gaze at each other obliquely,
Body to body pressed.....

* * *

It is best to live alone,
Breathe alone,
Dream alone,
Alone with one's sacred self,
One's reveries,
And memories,
And heavenly fantasies.....

Here I sit and think :
The world of women
Will fret me no more ;
And an hour from now,
Or to-morrow, it may be,
I will be talking to another
Pretty one
And every nerve in my body
Will exult as though
Inebriate with wine.....

Morbleu! What is this
Insanity of man's flesh!

LUX IN TENEBRIS

It was night.
Clouds,—
A fleet of soft white snow-drift clouds
Sailed by
On a blue-black sea ;
And here and there,
From the depths of this sea,
A star flashed forth
With its spear of light.....
And when the clouds sailed close
They spread a veil across the moon
Till its silver shone
Like an opal-tinted aureole.....
Then grew my heart all glad,
For never had I seen
Such a silver moon,
And such bright star-light,
And such snow-drift clouds
Asail on a blue-black sky. . . .

STUDY IN REVERSION

I know a human owl.

Gray-white beard coming to a point; spectacles
like an owl's eyes; a short fat body.

Looks most like an owl when he sits. And he
sits almost all the time. In the Library. I have never
seen a man able to sit so much, and so long.

How he does it? He is heavily-cushioned,—below

Well, this owl is hooting for war.....

Think of it: himself incapable of moving faster
than a waddling duck.....as sure of his old hide as a
superannuated porker,—this creature hoots and grunts
and screeches for slaughter and bloodshed.

From his perch in the Library.

Where he sits.

And sits.

And sits.

GEORGES LEWYS

I. Burgundy

BURGUNDY

Siege!

Krupps roaring, belching death—
Flanders—Burgundy—sucking, feeding on bloodshed;
Manhood's breath
red,
like blood-fed
Burgundy, wed
to murdered Liège——

Further siege!—
Turmoil.....
Burgundy's soil
saturated,
with bubbling gore,
and craving more——

Luscious grapes,
(Little child-shapes)
Rich ripe swelling grapes, from the vine,
Sent to the harvest, for wine,
To crash down the throats
of maddened throngs—
Then songs
And more rich red wine—a crimson sea,—
Laughter—cries—the twitch of
sodden throats—mad jubilee!—
Women carmine-lipped—white—
bosomed men—tongues set free
In amorous jest and ribaldry
On streaming blood-red Burgundy.

MARJORIE MUIR

I. A New England Town—At Noon

A NEW-ENGLAND TOWN—AT NOON

I walked thru an old New England town,
Past the white houses, stiff in their array,
The front doors closed, the windows tightly shut,
Keeping the strong noon sun from peering in.
Flowers, tall, graceful, bright-eyed things
Grew hidden in yards where children never played;
Past an old grave-yard crammed with ugly ruins
Of slabs and crude stone seraphim;
Past a closed school-house—it was summer then,
Vacation time, but strange to see
The streets were free of noise and play.
Over the town there hung a solemn hush
As tho the villagers had gone to bed
To await the end, when all had been decayed.
Something had killed the love of life, of youth.
The town was senile, filled with lifeless forms
Only the clock on the church-top lived—
And that was turning round and round,
Without purpose or will to stop itself.

EDWARD NAGLE

I The Orange Room

THE ORANGE ROOM

Deep within
The Orange room,
On a shelf of alabaster,
Twin sprays of Narcissi
Raise their heads
From out a green jade bowl,
Wonder-eyed,
Exhuming a putrescent fragrance . . .
Death commingled
With perfumed flesh

From the silence
Without the Orange room
Lustful cats
Wail harshly.

RUTH CLAY PRICE

*I. Fields**II. Anticipation**III. Strophe**IV. Eyes**V. Dearest**VI. Trampers**VII. Impressions*

FIELDS

I am sister of the virgin field,
Knowing the unbroken earth.

I am sister of the fallow field,
Sheathing the blade of the plough.

I am sister of the fertile field,
Sensing the swelling seed.

I am sister of the fruitful field,
Rearing the tawny grain.

ANTICIPATION

Pine tree:

Sun still,
Blurring the hill;
Thin growing,
Wind blowing,
Scent sowing;
Fulfill!

STROPHE

Priest and Priestess
At the altar
Hymeneal,
Make of our love
An altar fire
Perpetual;

With imagination
Tend the flame
Immortal:

All lovers are given
A religious moment
Temporal;

Only a few
The exaltation
Eternal.

EYES

Seen from the balcony, looking down:—
At tables around the dancing floor
The midnight crowd is watching
The stupid cabaret.

Applause.
Glasses clink.
Louder the music sounds.

A beautiful girl is dancing!

Flower—like her painted face.

Cigarette smoke dims the room.
Men and women seem but eyes agleam,
Eyes, glancing at

The girl who is dancing.

Passionate thought eyes,
Leering, sneering, jeering!

A circle of concupiscent eyes
Agglitter through the smoke.

DEAREST

Dearest, hark to the song of the bird—
 Now, no longer heard :
 As the song is lost in the blue,
 I am lost in you.

Dearest, sense the land's perfume—
 Fragrant leaf and bloom :
 As the fragrance is lost in the sea,
 You are lost in me.

TRAMPLERS

Elephants
 trampling the jungle :
 Monkeys,
 aloft,
 jabbering frantically ;
 the boldest
 hurling
 ineffectual cocoanuts.

Events
 trampling the world :
 individualists,
 aloof,
 jabbering frantically ;
 the boldest
 hurling
 ineffectual protests.

IMPRESSIONS

The virent salt-marsh tide is high to-night,
 Rippling, swishing through the reeds,
 The plashy, marshy weeds,
That flash of white, a homing gull in flight;
 Some call it heeds;
 Hush!

Trembling, the light recedes, the colors die,
 The sky is gray, the shadow of night
 Falls black on the water's light.
The heavens deepen with stars, the wind glides by,
 Night seems to sigh,
 Hush!

Through space, from purple sky, the starlight falls
 On pungent, lispig waves and grasses;
 Night's magnetism passes
Through the marsh: a distant sea-bird calls,
 The white mist crawls.
 Hush,
 Sh!

HELENE THURSTON

I. Sacrifice

II. Fear

III. Moonrise

SACRIFICE

Oh Mother Mary mild,
Thou gavest him to me,
A little child.
His lips against my breast,
His body next my heart
That loved him best.

So short a time, Oh God!
The days slipped swiftly past;
The years were trod,
And straight and strong and fair
He marched away,
And left me there

To watch and wait and pray,
While night piled up on night
And day on day.
And then they brought him home
To me, so white, so still;
And I alone

Bend over him and see
The promised youth snuffed out;
And tenderly
Hold close his fair young head.
How can they prate of peace
When he is dead?

FEAR

Do you see the gray mists twisting
Over the hill, Oh mother mine?
As if in dumb pain, resisting
The elements that seek to bind them to the line
Of dark hills yonder
Rising to shut the world from view,—
The world and all its wonder
From the great and new . . .
Do you see the gray mists curling
Like the sea, Oh mother mine,
As the wind comes whirling
To the great waves swirling
Over rockbound gray-brown coastline?
Do you hear the ceaseless beating,
Mother, as the mists surge overhead
As if strange music still repeating,
Weird music like lorn dirges o'er the dead?

MOONRISE

The cool and trailing garments of the dusk
Have dimmed the flaming ribbons of the sun.
From a walled garden comes the scent of musk.—
Beyond the darkening shadows of the trees
The black garbed mountains guard their mysteries.
The night-wind whispers secrets of a tryst

The moon must keep with the enchanted world
That waits—enwrapped in clouds of purple mist—
Impatiently the hour when radiant light
Shall pierce the thralling curtain of the night.

At last a faint far lustre tips the mountain's crest,
And drenches all the trees with silver rain.
The Goddess of the moon, in glittering garments
dressed,
Comes forth like some fair eastern temple maid ;—
The incense of her draperies fills the glade,

A filmy band of mist across her breast—
The fringes of her robe are caught with stars,—
And shyly, as if heeding earth's behest,
The edges of her veil are gently curled—
Her face smiles down upon the waiting world.

WINIFRED WALDRON

I. Three Wash-Drawings

II. The Garbage Man

III. "Know Thyself"

IV. Hokku

THREE WASH DRAWINGS

I.

Pelicans

Three white-breasted pelicans
Under the thin white moon,
They flap and sail
And sail and wheel
Under the thin white moon.

II.

Surf

Wild white legions of foam!
Ever running and racing and dying,
Legion following legion—
Ever the living pursuing the dying.

III.

Hound of the Sea

The Wind is the great white hound of the sea,
The Wind goes baying through the cories of the
Leaping at the running mountain-tops of foam! waves,

THE GARBAGE MAN

Our smiling garbage man
Takes refuse, papers, useless things;
He gives a "Yes Ma'm, Thank you Ma'm
For all your garbage!"
 Strange—at times we give the best—
 And then,—
But what of that?
Our garbage man will call again:
I shall give the garbage, and receive a hearty
"Yes Ma'm, Thank you Ma'm!"

"KNOW THYSELF"

My brothers chitter and squeak,
Run up cold bars and make faces,
Hang by their tails from greasy sticks,
Twitter and squabble and grab after peanuts,
Handfuls of peanuts held out by some careless fate;
Always peanuts! The senseless crackle of shells!
Do my brothers think there is nothing higher in Life
 than peanuts?

Only I sit alone in a corner, and improve myself;
All day I pick fleas,
Cracking them thoughtfully in my teeth.
I meditate on my own imperfections:
My mangy skin, my nests of fleas,
I at least am striving after Perfection.
My brothers! Oh, my brothers!

HOKKU

(Addressed to a Bee)

Bringer of pollen
Tender task is thy love flight
Love is my duty.

PRELUDE

Leaf-shadows into my lap came sifting,
Then into my lap the leaves came drifting.

Idly I gathered these gifts of the tree,
So would have scattered them, wanderers free:

When from the tree came the laughter of strife,
Lo—the tree was the Tree of Life!

ZELLA MURIEL WRIGHT

I. Delice

II. May Moods

III. A Song

IV. Songs of Creation

DELICE

It stands out like a flower of pale gold
Among all my drab days,—
That night we two ran afield
Through the alfalfa and sweet clover
The wind blew the shirt from your throat and chest
And I marvelled in silence
At their beautiful strength
Then we stood still;
You pressed your lips to my hair
And drew my head
Close, close to your body
Till I heard the mad throb of your heart
And the riot of blood in your veins

Among my colorless drab days
There's one flower of pale gold

MAY MOODS

(To J. H.)

My eyes would burn you up with scorn
Were it not for a tinge of pity
Because you understand so little
With unbounded conceit
You come—
Smiling—
Thinking you are doing well by me.
My God!
I have given you my life!
Do you think to repay it with a bauble?

(To J. K.)

You are like all the others—
“Will she
Or will she not
Give me her body?”
That is the question
That teases and torments you
And sends you reeling forth
Into the night,
Singing to the stars;
Or striding angrily down dusty roads,
Striking off the heads
Of helpless flowers
With your cane.

And I smile at your agitation
The smile you call inscrutable.
I smile because I know
Only too well

That sooner or later—sooner or later—
Even I,
 Knowing the pain
And the cost of the aftermath of love
And after you have known
The full strength of my arms
To hold you.
After you have felt the sting and fire of me,
After you have known my longest kiss—
A kiss which almost strangles—

Instead of being more to you
I shall be less. . . .

And you will go
Because
No longer
I smile
The smile
The smile you call inscrutable.

A SONG

My soul is full of poetry to-day;
Even the grey slush is beautiful,
And the cars, wet with mist,
That splash thru the street.
For somewhere
I catch the scent of Spring.

To-morrow
The sun!
And the never-ending road
Stretching before me.

You may starve my body
And clothe it in rags;
But you can never
Imprison my soul.

Sometimes
A little pain
Catches my throat
Because the happiness of settled homes
Cannot be mine.

Here—or there—
I have stopped by the roadside
And found joy for a time—
But not for long.
For me
It is eternal vagabondage.

SONGS OF CREATION

Printemps:

It is Spring!
The tense earth waits
For the impregnating seed;
The trees droop, caressing the earth;
The plowed fields drink up the rain
With a sucking sound.
The earth yearns for the impregnating seed;
To feel it draw the nourishment
Stored in her veins;
To feel new life
Stirring within her womb.

I have builded a house on the hillside
And the tang of the fresh-sawn pine
Is still in the air;
The fireplace is of lichened, igneous rock,
And the couch is made
Of the fragrant twig of the spruce.

It is Spring
And I have gone away from the abode of men
That I might hear the song of the earth.
All night I lay
With my ear pressed close to the ground
To catch the song.
The quiet moon climbed up across the sky
And glided behind a covert of young pines
Beyond the cabin;
The song of the frog calling his mate
Came up from the glen below;
But the tense earth moves not
And is silent

For her veins are bursting
With the desire for fruitfulness.

The birds will not sing tonight;
Even the trees will not whisper their secret.
I need the note of the violin
To fill in the silence.
You must come with your violin
And pour out a song of passion and tenderness.
Like the hot breath of a lover,
Like his trembling touch,
Your notes will wake the earth
And set her heart to beating
That I may catch the rhythm of it
For my song.

You will not mind if I do not speak to you.
Come silently.
You will find bread and a wedge of cheese
In the cupboard,
And a crock of fresh butter
Under the rock by the spring.
At dusk you will come
And sit in the doorway
While I lie upon the ground
With my ear pressed close
To catch the song of the All-Mother's heart.

Eté:

It is good to be loved.
A man waits for me
Who will cover my body with kisses;
He will bury his face in my hair;
He will weep with joy at the touch of me.
It is good to be loved.

I wait for you in the dusk.

How strange you seem tonight!
Your eyes glisten with a burnished light,
Like the eyes of a serpent,
Like the eyes of a god.
Wherever your eyes are turned upon me
My flesh burns
As tho two hot coals were laid upon it;
But I do not move.
Why do you never take your eyes from me?
Why do you tremble and grow so pale,
You who were so radiant and rigid
A moment ago?
You touch me and drop weakly in a heap;
There is no power in your muscles.
But it is only the weakness before madness;
A madness that gives you a ten-fold strength.
For a second I shrink with fear,
Lest in your ferocity, you devour me.
Then I laugh—my whole body laughs;
But I move not.
On my lips there is a faint smile,
Shall I tell you why I smile?

I smile because I am happy;
Because this instant is my instant
In this eternity of eternities.
Tonight I understand that life is not
The groping, broken, half-thing
It has always seemed.

TRANSLATIONS

EDNA W. UNDERWOOD

*I. The Painted Vase**II. Idleness*

I.

THE PAINTED VASE

La Rosalba disdaining for a day his paints and
brushes,
Took up a drop of gold.
One single drop of gold;
With it he drew upon the flank of this great antique
vase, the muses nine.
He drew well their floating gowns, their merry
scattered locks,
Their out-stretched hands that seek each other.
Within this vase of antique crystal, nobly lined, I
pour liqueur of Dansig.
The nine bright muses dance faster. They dance
round and round.
They dance around a lake on which the leaves of
autumn fall.

II.

IDLENESS

My head, my weary head, is like a timid bird that
folds itself from cold upon your breast.
The hour is gentle! the day is sweet and blue and
fine.
Autumn about to die caresses us.
Na, no—rise not, I pray you! Remain stretched out
like this on the divan.
I hold your soul beneath my ear. I feel its life.
Down there— down there through that wide open
window the church of the Isle of Tombs I see,
while—glittering—
It hangs, a pendant 'twixt your breasts.

JOSEPH KLING

I. The Stilled Voice

II. Strophe

III. Lines on the Death of Moishe Nadir

IV. Lines on Moishe Nadir Redivivus

V. Monody

VI. Winter Rain

VII. Fragment

VIII. Motif

THE STILLED VOICE

The fountain in my garden,
That sobbed
Like a sorrowing soul
Unendingly,
Died to-night,
And is still

And the mad wind
That flouted her
And tore her tinted veil,
Now mingles his sighing whisper
With the silence of her tomb.

In other days
The ceaseless falling
Of her tears
Drop by drop
Sounded clear
Through the trees,

Now the water,
Like a lake
Of voiceless sobs,
Lies dead and still

Yet her sorrow is not dead:
Hush!
Methinks I hear
The last faint echo
Of a moan. . . .

CONFESSION

Love,
I have sung high masses to you
Unbelievably,
Like a wicked priest,—
Richly robed,—
Raising the jewelled ostensory
Of my verse
To the wondering gaze
Of distant multitudes,
Swinging the golden censer
Of my strophes
Till their incense
Left my soul
Inebriate . . .

MONODY

She is playing
Her white lily-fingers
Seek the keys in the dark,
Longingly stray and seek
In the dark , , ,

And my little ones are weeping

I dressed them in little white shirts,
And put them to bed,
And extinguished the lamp
Made fast the door,
Paused a long moment clutching the key,
Then hastened, hastened, here
Here she plays
With her fingers lily-white
Straying, seeking,
Longingly
In the dark

And my children,
My sleepy shirt-clad little ones
Are weeping,
I'm the dark . . .

WINTER RAIN

Gray and old, gray and pale,
Bent and wet,
He totters along
Groping about,
Swaying in the wind,
Sobbing, weeping, over our sins.

LINES ON THE DEATH OF MOISHE NADIR

Composed by His Very Self

To the memory of Moishe Nadir,
Once among the living,
And neatly combed;
Who did spend two or three hours daily
On the perfect knotting of his cravat,
And who loved his every finger nail;
Loved, and esteemed, and protected
His precious self
From approaching locomotives
And chilling draughts. . . .

Now he lies cold,
And uncombed,
And without a cravat. . . .

And I,
With a smile,
And a bow of reverence,
Place here at his feet
A wreath of verse. . . .

LINES ON MOISHE NADIR—REDIVIVUS

Halleluja!

I sing to you my beloved friend,
Moishe Nadir

So sad it was,
So very sad,
The thought that you are dead,
Without a soul,
And a cravat,
And all sinful desires . . .

And now,
Oh, how I rejoice
That you are thoroughly alive again,
And blithe,
And youthful,
And popular with the ladies,
And a brilliant after-dinner speaker

And how sweet it was
Of your handsome father
And charming mother
To marry each other
That they might bear you,
Their adored son,
Their prodigy

Halleluja!

FRAGMENT

The candle's tallow
Drips and drips
Till the flickering flame expires,
So the flame of my soul
In the Prayer-House wanes,
Till like the candle anon
It will faint and expire.

MOTIF

On the garret sleeps the roof
Covered snug with shingles small,
But naked lies my little babe
In its crib by the mold'ring wall.

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